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ABSTRACT

The instructor's manual considers the inservice training topic of special needs students' learning styles and their implications for regular class teachers. Activities are described to help participants understand modality learning and informal tests to determine modality strengths. Teaching strategies for auditory and visual weaknesses are briefly listed as are the multisensory and the Visual Auditory Kinesthetic Tactile approaches. Modification--both environmental and behavioral--is described, and examples of an approach stressing logical consequences conclude the manual. (CL)

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ED213171

Manchester Community College Inservice Training Project

Year III 1980-1981

PROJECT: LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT: MCC INSERVICE TRAINING FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

"Learning Styles Of The Special Needs Student" (k - 6)

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INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

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PART I

In the following materials, the pronouns used are in the masculine gender. This term was chosen for clarity and does not imply that only male children experience learning difficulties.

Name _____ School _____

A. Pre-Test Key

Learning Styles of Special Needs Students

Indicate True or False

T 1. Learning modality refers to the way a student processes information.

F 2. The kinesthetic sense refers to the sense of taste.

F 3. Mnemonic devices must be used with the physically handicapped.

F 4. Children who have difficulty remembering rhymes, days of the week, and phone numbers are slow learners.

T 5. In reading, if a child substitutes synonyms for the written word, he may have an auditory weakness.

T 6. A child who is slow to complete work may have a visual weakness.

F 7. A teacher should expect less of special needs students.

F 8. Behavioral concerns are of little consequence with special needs students.

T 9. Disorganization may be a characteristic of the special needs students.

F 10. "I will not kick others" is a good expectation for a behavior modification program.

B. Introduction To Learning Styles Of Special Needs Students

When Public Law 94-142 went into effect in 1975 few people realized the impact that it would have. The legislation contains a clause stating that all identified special education students must receive a free and appropriate education in the Least Restrictive Environment. For many children, the Least Restrictive Environment became the regular classroom for all or part of the school day.

Classroom teachers who had minimal or no training in the teaching of special needs students(the learning disabled, mentally impaired, the physically handicapped or the socially and emotionally impaired), became more responsible for the education of these students. Workshops, such as this one, were designed to aid the regular classroom teacher in the teaching of special needs students.

Special needs students are generally "hard-to-teach" students. Although the student may be able to learn the material, he may have perceptual weaknesses that prevent him from learning through a particular modality *either visual, auditory or kinesthetic. He may have a great deal of difficulty remembering what has been taught. He may have difficulty attending to what is being taught. In short, for these "hard to teach" students certain modifications may need to be made in the presentation of the material, reinforcement of the concepts, expectations of the student, the amount of time required to grasp the concept, and in the behavioral climate of the classroom.*

The purpose of this workshop is to familiarize teachers with means of providing the best education for special needs students. Various learning styles will be examined as well as, means of informally assessing these *learning styles. Teaching strategies for "hard-to-teach" children will be discussed and means will be presented to modify the classroom environment to make it more manageable.*

C. Definition Of Terms

1. Learning Styles - the ways through which people learn.
2. Special needs students-students who are learning disabled, mildly mentally impaired, socially/emotionally impaired or any other student who is a "hard to teach" student.
3. Learning modality-the learning channel-auditory, visual, kinesthetic or tactile.
4. Auditory channel-the processing of information through the ears including: hearing, auditory-perception and auditory-memory.
5. Visual channel-the processing of information through the eyes including seeing, visual perception, and visual memory.
6. Kinesthetic channel-the processing of information through body movement.
7. Tactile channel- the processing of information received by touch.
8. Auditory perception- includes localization of sound, attention to sound, discrimination of sounds, separation of sound from background sound (auditory figure-ground).
9. Visual perception-includes awareness of and attention to visual stimulus discrimination of shapes and symbols and separation of visual stimulus from background (visual figure-ground).
10. Mnemonic devices-"gimmicks" for remembering information.
11. Subvocalization-to say to one's self
12. On task behavior-attending to the task, job, assignment at hand.
13. Compensation-using stronger modalities to circumvent weaker modalities.
14. VAKT- a multisensory learning process using visual, auditory and kinesthetic-tactile modalities. Developed by Grace Fernald.

D. Modality Learning

The means by which we perceive and react to the world is by way of our senses. All of us have some senses that are stronger than others of our senses. We may read (using the visual modality) and remember better than we can listen (auditory modality) and remember. We generally ask students to perceive and respond by using different modalities in different combinations. We might ask them to use the visual modality, the auditory modaility, or the kinesthetic-tactile modality. The kinesthetic - tactile modality involves the use of our muscles through movement and our sense of touch. Optimal learning takes place when we use our strongest modalities. We may find that if we have an especially weak modality, we tend to by-pass it entirely. We may find that two or more modalities work together to help us process and remember better than a single modality.

For example, we may read an article and repeat the important points to ourselves in order to better remember the information. In this case we are combining visual and auditory modalities. If, on the other hand, we read the article and then jot down the important points, we are combining the visual with the kinesthetic (writing).

In order to better understand modality learning, let us assess our own modality strengths and weaknesses.

Play the "10 Game, *(give each participant a deck of cards)*

For the moment, simply listen as I explain how to play "The 10 Game." No matter how tempting do not pick up your deck of cards!

1. *Instructor reads rules and gives no visual clues.*
   a. *shuffle the deck and place it face down in front of you.*
   b. *the object of this game is to end up with all the kings in the corners, the queens at the top and the bottom and the jacks to the left and right of a vertical rectangle formed by 16 playing cards.*

c. *in order to play, turn over the cards one at a time and place each in one of 16 places.*

d. *spaces reserved for face cards must be used by number cards if no other spaces are available.*

e. *when 16 cards have been played, remove all the combinations whose sum is 10 - aces count as ones- a maximum of 2 cards may be used in combination.*

f. *if a facecard is overturned and its designated space is not available, the game is lost.*

2. *Instructor asks if any participant could play the game based solely on auditory information. Next, for those who cannot yet play, give the auditory in combination with the visual(expose chart made with) a) written directions and b) diagram of desired positions of face-cards. Ask if any now have a better understanding of the game. Suggest the addition of the kinesthetic-tactile modality and play the game. Remediate as necessary. Discuss implications of multi-sensory input.*

Just as each of us learns in a unique fashion, so do the children we teach. Through the informal inventories that follow and through observations, we can best determine individual student strengths and weaknesses in modality *learning. When we have the opportunity to teach students individually we can teach through their modality strengths while trying to remediate modality weaknesses. When we teach groups of children it is important to consistently give input and receive output through varying modalities. All too many of us are guilty of primarily using modalities that we prefer. We often present material auditorally(approximately 50% of the time)instead of combining the visual and the kinesthetic-tactile with the auditory. If we use multi-sensory techniques we are more likely to meet the learning styles of more students.*

E. Behavioral Indicators Of Modality Strengths And Weaknesses

Through the way each of your students approaches and retains academic material, he indicates to you how best he learns. It is important that we take notice of these indicators in order to provide better quality teaching.

Some students, for example, may seem to always have their hands on everything in the class. When a new material is presented, they rush to be the first to touch it. They play with their pencils instead of listening. If we examine these behaviors we might find a child who learns kinesthetically, rather than merely a child with a behavior problem.

Some children have difficulty remembering rhymes, days of the week, months of the year, jokes or their phone numbers. If this material is presently visually, however, they are able to retain it. These children may be indicating that they are visual learners.

Some children, on the other hand, get very little from visually presented materials. They may have difficulty analyzing pictures or even reading. For these children, classroom discussion is essential. They retain what they hear.

Finally, there are those children who do not seem to have a particular modality strength. These are children who benefit most from multi-sensory teaching. They need to read material, discuss it, do an activity related to the material and write about it.

The following pages indicate some modality weaknesses as viewed through academics and general classroom behavior.

F. Checklist For Auditory Errors[1]

In spelling:

_____ 1. substitute t for d, f for v, sh for ch
_____ 2. omits vowels
_____ 3. omits middle part of word
_____ 4. confuses vowel sounds
_____ 5. omits second letter of blend
_____ 6. uses a synonym such as house for home
_____ 7. omits endings
_____ 8. writes word totally different from that dictated

In reading:

_____ 1. can identify letter name but not sound
_____ 2. guesses wildly at words
_____ 3. a synonym is substituted
_____ 4. a sound is substituted for another
_____ 5. has difficulty blending

In general classroom behavior:

_____ 1. distractibility
_____ 2. appears emotionally disturbed or retarded
_____ 3. difficulty finding sound source
_____ 4. difficulty discrimating sounds
_____ 5. difficulty attending
_____ 6. listens to teacher in next room
_____ 7. difficulty recalling sounds
_____ 8. difficulty following directions
_____ 9. difficulty remembering messages, songs, months of the year, poems, etc.

[1] Mann, Phillip, H. and Patricia Suiter, Handbook in Diagnostic Teaching, Pages 17-32.

G. Checklist For Visual Errors[2]

In spelling:

_____ 1. *omits second letter of double letters(prety for pretty)*
_____ 2. *transposes order of letters (hte for the)*
_____ 3. *reverses letters or words (b-d, was - saw)*
_____ 4. *inverts letters (u,n)*
_____ 5. *mixes upper and lower case letters*

In reading:

_____ 1. *slow to name word*
_____ 2. *omits middle letters*
_____ 3. *reads right to left or reverses letters*
_____ 4. *inverts letters (reads me for we)*
_____ 5. *fails to discriminate fine differences (snip for ship)*
_____ 6. *adds or omits letters in words*
_____ 7. *tries to sound out all words, even sight words*
_____ 8. *reads word by word, poor phrasing*
_____ 9. *loses place*
_____ 10. *adds words*
_____ 11. *repeats words*
_____ 12. *ignores punctuation*
_____ 13. *tends to decode only beginning sound*

In general classroom behavior:

_____ 1. *difficulty attending*
_____ 2. *written work is disorganized*
_____ 3. *poor letter formation*
_____ 4. *difficulty keeping place*
_____ 5. *omits material when copying*
_____ 6. *slow to complete work*
_____ 7. *cannot recognize words out of* context
_____ 8. *difficulty discriminating visually similar shapes, letter, numbers, words.*
_____ 9. *looks at word parts instead of integrating into a whole*
_____ 10. *cannot recall what various letters, words, objects look like*
_____ 11. *transposes letters, numbers*
_____ 12. *has difficulty with directionality of symbols.*

[2]*Mann, Phillip H. and Patricia Suiter, Handbook in Diagnostic Teaching, Pages 17-36.*

H. Informal Tests To Determine Modality Strength

Certainly much information can be gained by observing a child's behavior and the way he approaches academic tasks. In addition, however, you may wish to utilize some of the following informal inventories.

A. Teach the "10-Game" - card game used earlier in workshop.

B. Take a Shopping Trip

1. Prepare three shopping lists that have five items of comparable familiarity, comparable number of letters and syllables, and no particular relationship to each other. For example:

	A	B	C
1.	Bandaids	Toothpaste	Kleenex
2.	Oranges	Milk	Eggs
3.	Rice	Bananas	Raisins
4.	Peppers	Peanuts	Onions
5.	Popcorn	Carrots	Grapefruits

2. Divide the class into three groups.

3. Each group will have the opportunity to go to stations A,B, and C.

4. At each station there will be a storekeeper.

5. List A will be presented visually;
List B will be presented auditorally;
List C will be traced in pencil .

6. Each group has a turn at each station and after each station each member has the opportunity to tell the storekeeper his list of items.

7. After the activity discuss which modality was easiest for the students.

I. Teaching Strategies

For Auditory Weaknesses:[3]

1. Use manipulatives to keep the child's attention
2. Use a clicker or sound signal, if necessary, to get the child's attention.
3. Play sound finding games.
4. Ask child to discriminate grossly different sounds (rain,bell) and work to finer discriminations.
5. Avoid teaching similar sounds (p or b, f or v) together.
6. Do not overload-teach only one sound per day.
7. If needed, place student in a quiet work place.
8. Use visual and kinesthetic clues when giving auditory activities. (For example, have a child manipulate letters when teaching blending.)
9. Never require a student to rely solely on the auditory modality if it is not intact.

For Visual Weaknesses[4]

1. Block out distracting parts of workbook pages.
2. Keep visual materials simple, with adequate space between examples or problems.
3. Allow child to vocalize (say material to himself) when doing academics.
4. Do not overload environment visually.
5. To discriminate fine differences, first ask the child to verbalize differences between grossly different concrete objects. Move to more subtle differences and to symbols.

[3] Mann, Phillip H. and Patricia Suiter, Handbook in Diagnostic Teaching, Pages 17-36.

[4] Ibid, Pages 17-36

6. Introduce manipulation of letters and tracing coupled with auditory clues for learning letters and words.

7. Give the student color clues and associative clues to remember directionality of symbols. (See Example in Appendix 11)

8. Never require a student to rely solely on the visual modality if it is not intact.

In 1943, Grace Fernald published a technique she called VAKT.[5] VAKT stands for Visual Auditory Kinesthetic-Tactile. It is a multi-sensory means of spelling and reading. It is still quite effective with many children.

VAKT for reading:

1. write the word on the board or on paper.
2. say the word to the student.
3. the student says the word.
4. the student traces the word with first two fingers of dominant hand while blending the sounds as he goes.
5. upon completion he says the word again.
6. he turns, closes eyes, and writes the word in the air, sounding as he goes.
7. he turns to the board and says the word a final time.

VAKT for spelling:

The procedure is the same as for reading with the following exceptions:

1. The student says letter names as he traces.
2. The last step is that the student writes the word without visual clues.

[5]Fernald, Grace. Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects. Pages 4-8.

Another means by which to reinforce academics is through mnemonics or memory devices. For many children "gimmicks" are needed to help stimulate memory. We have all used mnemonics. We know for example, that in music the spaces for the treble clef spell "FACE" and that the lines can be remembered by "Every Good Boy Does Fine." We know that there is a piece of PPIE" in "PIEce." I before E except after C," etc. Many children will devise their own mnemonics, though others may need your assistance.

PART II

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A. Environmental Modifications

1. Physical Modification

Many times the physical environment of the room can hinder or enhance the performance of the special needs student. Those who are especially susceptible to auditory or visual distraction should be seated away from excess distraction. Special needs students may need to sit as close as possible to the teacher or material being presented in order to aid their concentration. A student who must touch everyone and everything needs a short route to hand in papers, sharpen pencils, etc.

It is helpful if the physical plan of the room is well organized. Many special needs students have difficulty organizing themselves, and the teacher can often superimpose a structure for them.

2. Expectancy Modification

It is important not to sell the special needs student short by expecting too little of him. He may, however, need some modification in how he is expected to accomplish a task. If, for example, he has difficulty absorbing material visually, he must be permitted access to material through discussion or a tape recorder. If he has tremendous difficulty writing answers to a test, he might be able to answer questions orally or on a tape recorder. In this way the student is allowed access to a material or concept through an intact modality, and he is allowed to demonstrate his mastery of the subject through an intact modality.

3. Management Techniques

It is impossible to address the needs of special needs students without considering behavior. For numerous reasons, special needs students are generally those with the poorest classroom behavior. When we examine the situation rationally, it is easy to understand. Special needs students and

especially those with a learning disability may have a great deal of difficulty with organization. It may be due to the fact that they are constantly faced with the need to translate environmental stimuli into understanding, by way of a modality that is appropriate. They become overwhelmed are are unable to organize.

For example, if we have a child who has a deficit in the visual modality and who compensates by vocalizing to remember, you can imagine his difficulty on a spelling test. Suppose the word has been dictated, used in a sentence, repeated, and the teacher goes on to the next word. This child continues to repeat the word over and over again, under his breath, to remember it. Obsessed with remembering the word, he forgets how to make the first letter. Finally he remembers and writes it on the paper. Is it any wonder that he writes it on the wrong line or that by the time he writes the word the nest one has been given? The student appears to be disorganized on this task.

Other children who seem disorganized may be those who are easily distracted. While the spelling test is progressing they listen to the mower across the street or watch the gerbil in the back of the room. Still other children who appear to be disorganized simply do not recognize and appreciate organization as we know it! These are the children who are on task during the entire spelling test, who are accurate in their spellings, but whose paper may look like mazes when given to the teacher.

In summary, disorganization can be a major factor in poor behavior habits in special needs students. While not intending to be aggrevating or malicious, this child may be late to class, after recess, may never turn in homework, may have a hard time staying on task, maybe a poor listener, may have poor study habits, may turn in messy papers, may have a messy desk, may neglect to clean up after an art project, may forget his permission slip on the day of the field trip, and so on and so on. The afore mentioned, add up

a child with substantial behavior problems.

In spite of our understanding of the problem and sympathy toward the child, reality states that we cannot continue to repeat, remind, or totally cater to this child when there are nineteen other children in the classroom. For this child we must create a sense of organization. He needs this structure in order to be successful. The goal, is that he accepts an artificial organization, begins to internalize it, in order that over a period of time he can become more organized.

Aside from the organizational problem, many special needs students have other behavior problems. One common characteristic of special needs students is low self-esteem. A constant in the lives of these children is failure. When a child is constantly failing at tasks or in his relationships with others, he may "act out" feelings of hostility and frustration. This creates the desire in the child to hit, bite, kick, scream, tease, push, talk back, make rude comments, and so forth. These behaviors may also be attention-getting mechanisms for a child who has a great many problems.

If the behavior is merely an attention-getting mechanism and is not a constant behavior, there is some merit in ignoring the behavior so as not to reinforce it. There is no point in giving attention to a negative behavior unless you plan to transform it into a positive behavior. The risk of giving attention when a child consistently demonstrates negative behavior is that the child will crave the attention. You thus, reinforce the negative behavior. Soon it becomes quite difficult for the child to release himself from this negative pattern.

It is better to change the behavior into a positive one by use of a behavior management approach. This can be accomplished with the use of a checklist, chart, and reward system.

B. Behavior Modification

There are numerous creative and effective means of modifying behaviors. In order for any system to work there are some basic rules:

1. *Let the student know what is expected of him.*
2. *Let him know the consequences of not doing what is expected.*
3. *Be consistent.*

Sometimes these basic rules can modify behaviors by themselves. If so, great! If not, you may wish to employ some of the following techniques:

The Checklist Or Chart (several examples follow)

The checklist or chart can be effective because by putting the child's performance on paper we put it in concrete, tangible terms, The child can see if he did what was expected; when he did it, how many times he did it, etc.

Basic rules for success with checklists or charts are:

1. *Start with only one expectation.*
2. *State it in a positive manner.*
   I will keep my hands to myself.
   I will stay on task.
   I will use polite language.
   I will remember to capitalize the beginning of a sentence, etc.)
3. *Discuss the system (or better yet, devise it) with the student.*
4. *Build in a mutually agreed upon reward. (In some cases the checklist itself will be motivating. In other cases a reward, tangible or intangible must be built in. It is best to coordinate the system and reward with the child's home.)*
5. *Make a contract.*
6. *Make sure the expectation and time increments allow the child to meet with success.*
7. *Revise as necessary. When the child is successful, add another behavior or increase time increment.*

Note: Any behavior management system must be approached as a positive alternative for the child. It is not a punishment. Discuss with the child the gains which can be made by changing behavior.

Will more kids play with me?
Will I be trusted more?
Will my parents be proud of me?

Reinforce that this is only a way to help the child show this behavior. With some passage of time, the child will be able to do it on his own.

Examples Of Behavior Modification Techniques

Example Of Contract

Date March 1, 1981

I, Mark, will do my best to stay on task. If I do this for 4/5 days, I will earn the right to watch "The Dukes of Hazard."

Signature of Student _____

Signature of Teacher _____

Example Of Checklist

Name Mark

Week Of March 1, 1981

I can stay on task

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30- 8:45	*				
8:45- 9:00	*				
9:00- 9:15	*				
9:15- 9:30	-				
9:30- 9:45	*				
9:45-10:00	*				
10:00-10:15	*				
10:15-10:30	-				
10:30-10:45	*				
10:45-11:00	*				
11:00-11:15	*				
11:15-11:30	*				
Total	10				

10/12 stars indicates a good day

4/5 good days earns the reward

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(I)

Example Of More Complex Checklist.

Math

Tim	Mon.	Tues.	Wednes.	Thurs.	Fri.
1. Keeps track of personal possessions.	✓				
2. Organizes paper with heading and date.	✓				
3. Consistently uses left-right directionality.	✓				
4. Completes written work neatly.	✓				
5. Follows oral and written directions.	–				
6. Gets to class on time.	✓				
Total	5				

_____

(Parent's Signature)

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Week of _____

26/30 ✓'s earns reward. Parent signs nightly.

CHEFS!	Jan. 18th	Jan. 25th	Feb. 1st	Feb. 8th	Feb. 15th	Feb. 22nd	March 1st	March 8th	March 15th
Sally	✓✓✓✓								
Mark	✓✓✓✓								
Tommy	✓✓✓								
Cathy	✓✓✓✓								
Joe	✓✓✓✓								
Peter	✓✓✓✓								

Examples of Group Chart

Reward — privelege of cooking
Each child must have 4 out of 5 good recesses each week

C. Logical Consequences

Another means of controlling behavior that is advocated concerns logical consequences. The basic premise is that there is a logical consequence for every misbehavior.

The following examples are excerpts from A New Approach To Discipline:[6]

"Jim had been coming in late after recess. This happened several times, and caused him to miss the explanation of his seat work, which is given immediately following the recess period. Jim was told that it was not fair to the other children for the teacher to take time from class to go over this work again just because he, Jimmy, wanted a little extra play time. The next time Jimmy came in late he was not given the explanation; therefore, he could not do the work. When he asked what to do, he was told that he would be given the explanation as soon as the others were dismissed. Then he had to finish the work before he left. He has not been late since."

DISCUSS

"A few weeks ago one of the boys in our classroom was constantly getting out of his seat, leaning on his desk, and doing his work from a half-standing position. I finally asked him whether he would rather stand or sit while doing his work. It made no difference to me which way he preferred. The boy stated that he would prefer standing. I explained to him he would then no longer need his seat and we could, therefore, take the chair out of the room, which we did, allowing the boy to stand up for the rest of the day. The following day, at the beginning of the period, I asked the boy whether he would like standing or sitting. This time he preferred sitting, and we no longer had any difficulty with him about his half-standing position."

[6] *Dreikurs, Rudolf and Loren Grey. A New Approach To Discipline. Pages 127-145 Pages 127-145.*

DISCUSS

The management techniques mentioned (charting, contracts, rewards, checklists, and in some cases, logical consequences) are for significant and consistent displays of poor behavior. Sometimes all that is necessary to bring about a desired behavior is to praise the child when he displays it:

"John, I like the way you are listening."
"Mary and Carole, you are doing a good job of waiting in line." etc.

Always note, too, that when a child is demonstrating inappropriate behavior, it is the behavior you do not like, not the child. If he truly feels that he is a bad boy, there is no point in trying to behave.

- Ask for questions or comments.

PART III

Name _____ School _____

A. Post-Test Key

Learning Styles Of Special Needs Students

Indicate True or False

T 1. Learning modality refers to the way a student processes information.

F 2. The kinesthetic sense refers to the sense of taste.

F 3. Mnemonic devices must be used with the physically handicapped.

F 4. Children who have difficulty remembering rhymes, days of the week, and phone numbers are slow learners.

T 5. In reading, if a child substitutes synonyms for the written word, he may have an auditory weakness.

T 6. A child who is slow to complete work may have a visual weakness.

F 7. A teacher should expect less of special needs students.

F 8. Behavioral concerns are of little consequence with special needs students.

T 9. Disorganization may be a characteristic of the special needs student.

F 10. "I will not kick others" is a good expectation for a behavior modification program.

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